



No. 919	Author Steven E. Backs, Wildlife Research Biologist	Date 6/28/2006
	Title 2006 Spring Wild Turkey Harvest - Check Station Results	

**Abstract:** Hunters harvested 13,193 wild turkeys in 79 of the 88 counties open to hunting compared to 11,159 birds harvested in 2005. The 2006 harvest was a new high and an 18% increase over 2005. The majority of the birds were harvested in the earlier part of the season and the morning hours. Juvenile weights were down again from previous year's mean weights. The proportion of juveniles in the harvest (14%) was the lowest in over 25 years and reflects the contrasting record high and low production of the respective 2004 and 2005 summer brood seasons.

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The 37th wild turkey hunt was held 26 April to 14 May 2006 with harvest data collected at 320 check stations throughout the turkey range. Hunters harvested 13,193 wild turkeys in 79 of the 88 counties open to hunting during the 19-day season. The 2006 harvest was a new high and an 18% increase over the 11,159-bird harvest of 2005. Counties with high kills (>400 birds harvested) were Switzerland (562), Dearborn (489), Perry (470), Jefferson (461), Parke (444), Orange (440), and Harrison (431) (**Table 1; Figure 1**). Approximately 61% of the harvest occurred during the first 5 days of the season with 32% occurring on weekends (**Figure 2**).

Approximately 70% of the harvest occurred by 1000 hrs and 79% by noon with 15% occurring after 1500 hrs (3 pm) to sunset (**Figure 3**). Unlicensed landowners/active military personnel accounted for 19% of the harvest, more than twice the proportion in previous years.

Based on spur measurements taken at check stations, juvenile gobblers (1 yr-old birds commonly referred to as "jakes") made up 14% of the 2006 harvest; 2 yr-olds (67%);  $\geq 3$  yr-olds (19%) (**Table 2; Figure 4**). The average weights of jakes were down from previous years, below the mean 15.5 lbs for the second year in a row. The proportion of jakes (14%) in the harvest was considerably lower than the 25% mean of the previous 10 years and the lowest jake proportion in over 25 years. Adults ( $\geq 2$  yrs) made up 86% of the harvest with the proportion of 2-yr-old gobblers (67%), the highest in 37 years of Indiana spring wild turkey hunting.

Reasons for the 18% harvest increase include the high brood production during 2004 summer, the continued increases in both the turkey population and turkey hunter numbers. The abnormally low juvenile and high adult proportions in the age structure of the harvest reflect the contrasting record high and low brood production during the respective 2004 and 2005 summers. The number of hunters afield was estimated at around 51,000 with an estimated hunter success of 26% (**Table 3**).

Special thanks goes to Roger Hunter, Mitchell office, who put together the check station materials and to Steve Burcham, Susan Pierce, Becky Wilson, and Clare Moser who handled the data entry. Acknowledgment also goes to the 320 volunteer check station operators for their efforts and cooperation in collecting the harvest data.



Table 1. Indiana wild turkey harvest by county, spring 2005 and 2006.

County	2005 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	2006 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	Difference from prior year	Percent Change
Adams	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Allen	6	0.1%	2	0.0%	-4	-66.7%
Bartholomew	119	1.1%	127	1.0%	8	6.7%
Benton	6	0.1%	11	0.1%	5	83.3%
Blackford	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open
Boone	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Brown	227	2.0%	287	2.2%	60	26.4%
Carroll	7	0.1%	4	0.0%	-3	-42.9%
Cass	33	0.3%	30	0.2%	-3	-9.1%
Clark	298	2.7%	342	2.6%	44	14.8%
Clay	107	1.0%	161	1.2%	54	50.5%
Clinton	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Crawford	329	2.9%	376	2.8%	47	14.3%
Daviess	86	0.8%	108	0.8%	22	25.6%
Dearborn	368	3.3%	489	3.7%	121	32.9%
Decatur	46	0.4%	57	0.4%	11	23.9%
DeKalb	44	0.4%	64	0.5%	20	45.5%
Delaware	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open
Dubois	230	2.1%	262	2.0%	32	13.9%
Elkhart	24	0.2%	19	0.1%	-5	-20.8%
Fayette	40	0.4%	53	0.4%	13	32.5%
Floyd	63	0.6%	75	0.6%	12	19.0%
Fountain	153	1.4%	177	1.3%	24	15.7%
Franklin	347	3.1%	399	3.0%	52	15.0%
Fulton	51	0.5%	59	0.4%	8	15.7%
Gibson	113	1.0%	120	0.9%	7	6.2%
Grant	2	0.0%	6	0.0%	4	200.0%
Greene	352	3.2%	397	3.0%	45	12.8%
Hamilton	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	-1	-100.0%
Hancock	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Harrison	406	3.6%	431	3.3%	25	6.2%
Hendricks	4	0.0%	5	0.0%	1	25.0%
Henry	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open
Howard	4	0.0%	6	0.0%	2	50.0%
Huntington	9	0.1%	21	0.2%	12	133.3%
Jackson	221	2.0%	310	2.3%	89	40.3%
Jasper	50	0.4%	54	0.4%	4	8.0%
Jay	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open
Jefferson	415	3.7%	461	3.5%	46	11.1%
Jennings	277	2.5%	317	2.4%	40	14.4%
Johnson	35	0.3%	41	0.3%	6	17.1%
Knox	61	0.5%	72	0.5%	11	18.0%
Kosciusko	26	0.2%	32	0.2%	6	23.1%
Lagrange	72	0.6%	85	0.6%	13	18.1%
Lake	4	0.0%	5	0.0%	1	25.0%
LaPorte	132	1.2%	153	1.2%	21	15.9%
Lawrence	273	2.4%	354	2.7%	81	29.7%

\* Harvest totals from check station reports.

Table 1 continued on next page.

Table 1. Indiana wild turkey harvest *Continued*

County	2005 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	2006 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	Difference from prior year	Percent Change
Madison	1	0.0%	2	0.0%	1	100.0%
Marion	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Marshall	167	1.5%	182	1.4%	15	9.0%
Martin	228	2.0%	293	2.2%	65	28.5%
Miami	21	0.2%	17	0.1%	-4	-19.0%
Monroe	208	1.9%	298	2.3%	90	43.3%
Montgomery	49	0.4%	66	0.5%	17	34.7%
Morgan	64	0.6%	72	0.5%	8	12.5%
Newton	56	0.5%	75	0.6%	19	33.9%
Noble	15	0.1%	12	0.1%	-3	-20.0%
Ohio	161	1.4%	165	1.3%	4	2.5%
Orange	373	3.3%	440	3.3%	67	18.0%
Owen	232	2.1%	313	2.4%	81	34.9%
Parke	376	3.4%	444	3.4%	68	18.1%
Perry	445	4.0%	470	3.6%	25	5.6%
Pike	261	2.3%	333	2.5%	72	27.6%
Porter	13	0.1%	15	0.1%	2	15.4%
Posey	86	0.8%	101	0.8%	15	17.4%
Pulaski	61	0.5%	85	0.6%	24	39.3%
Putnam	151	1.4%	199	1.5%	48	31.8%
Randolph	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ripley	223	2.0%	304	2.3%	81	36.3%
Rush	1	0.0%	3	0.0%	2	200.0%
St. Joseph	99	0.9%	111	0.8%	12	12.1%
Scott	181	1.6%	199	1.5%	18	9.9%
Shelby	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	-2	-100.0%
Spencer	278	2.5%	306	2.3%	28	10.1%
Starke	163	1.5%	191	1.4%	28	17.2%
Steuben	216	1.9%	215	1.6%	-1	-0.5%
Sullivan	232	2.1%	288	2.2%	56	24.1%
Switzerland	478	4.3%	562	4.3%	84	17.6%
Tippecanoe	30	0.3%	47	0.4%	17	56.7%
Tipton	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	-1	-100.0%
Union	67	0.6%	81	0.6%	14	20.9%
Vanderburg	9	0.1%	16	0.1%	7	77.8%
Vermillion	135	1.2%	152	1.2%	17	12.6%
Vigo	151	1.4%	190	1.4%	39	25.8%
Wabash	38	0.3%	57	0.4%	19	50.0%
Warren	108	1.0%	132	1.0%	24	22.2%
Warrick	356	3.2%	349	2.6%	-7	-2.0%
Washington	286	2.6%	372	2.8%	86	30.1%
Wayne	44	0.4%	29	0.2%	-15	-34.1%
Wells	5	0.0%	1	0.0%	-4	-80.0%
White	23	0.2%	26	0.2%	3	13.0%
Whitley	10	0.1%	8	0.1%	-2	-20.0%
Unknown	14	0.1%				
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,159</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,193</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,034</b>	<b>18.2%</b>

\* Harvest totals from check station reports.

**Figure 1.**  
**2006 Spring Turkey Harvest**

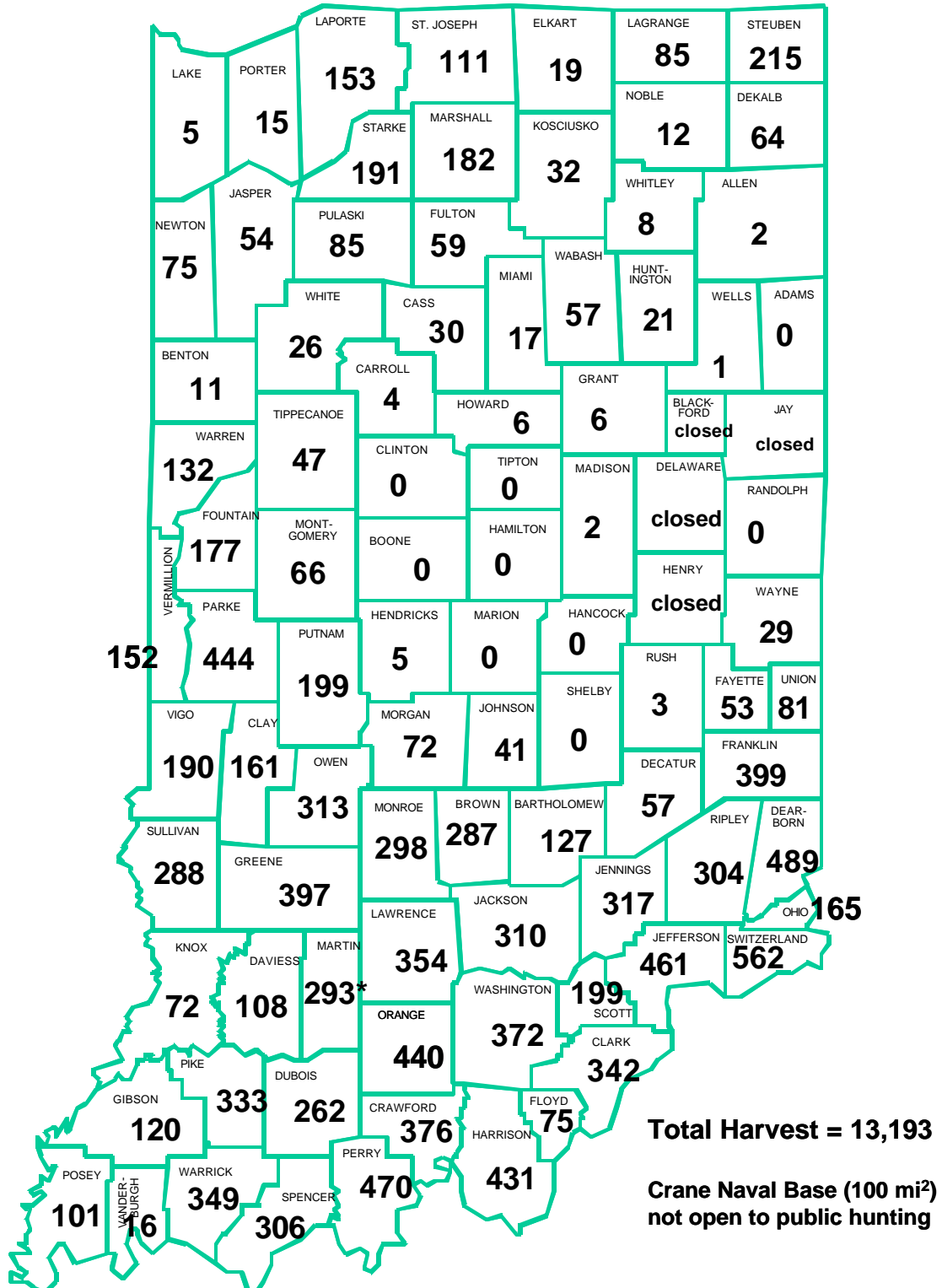


Figure 2 Harvest by Day  
2006 Spring Turkey Season

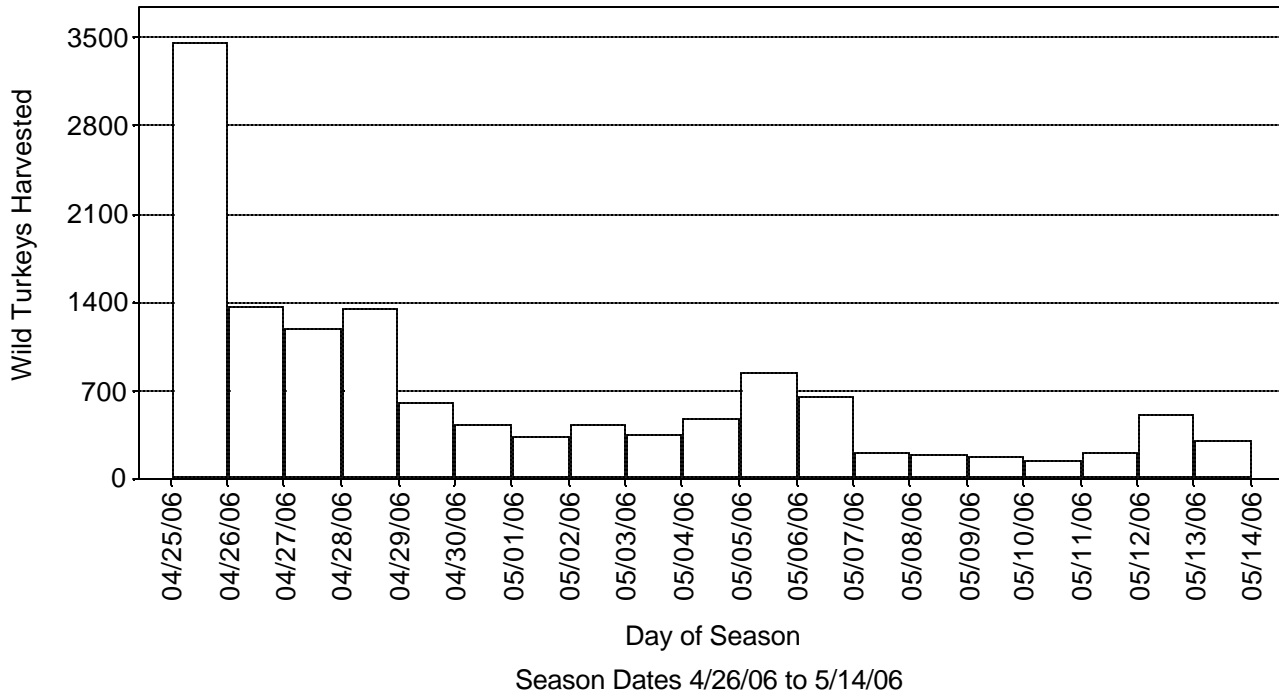


Figure 3 Reported Time of Kill  
2006 Spring Turkey Season

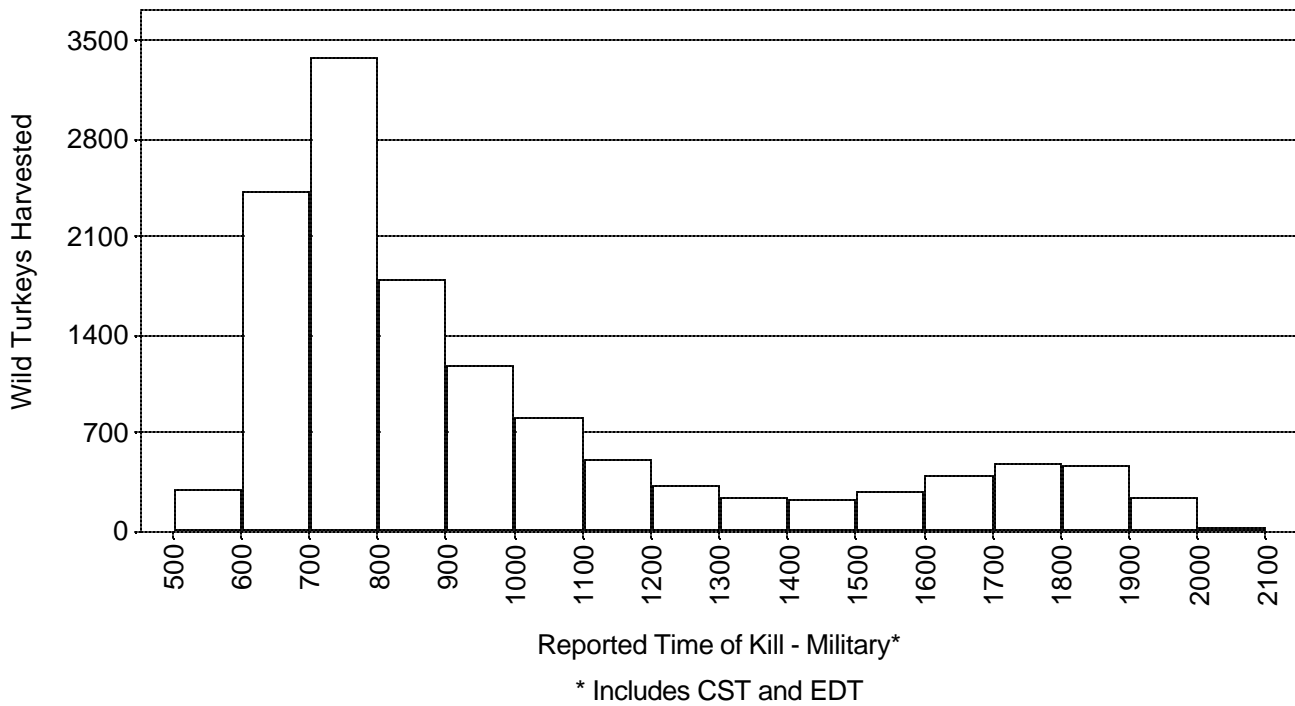


Table 2. Composition of Indiana's spring gobbler harvests, 1970-2004.

Year	Reported Harvest	Age Class Percentages* and Mean Weights (lbs)					
		1Yr	Wt.	2Yr	Wt	3+Yr	Wt
1980	54	33%		38%		29%	
1981	90	29%		20%		51%	
1982	73	21%		19%		60%	
1983	93	34%		38%		28%	
1984	104	32%		39%		29%	
1985	255	40%		39%		21%	
1986	293	29%		41%		30%	
1987	741	24%		44%		32%	
1988	905	45%	15.4	39%	20.7	16%	21.8
1989	1,359	20%	15.5	63%	20.7	17%	22.2
1990	1,505	31%	15.2	41%	21.0	28%	21.9
1991	2,318	25%	15.5	53%	21.1	22%	22.2
1992	2,531	38%	15.1	43%	20.8	19%	22.2
1993	3,500	18%	15.9	60%	20.9	22%	22.4
1994	3,741	41%	15.2	37%	21.2	22%	22.4
1995	4,706	28%	15.6	55%	20.6	18%	22.1
1996	4,859	24%	15.6	53%	21.6	23%	22.7
1997	5,790	21%	15.7	56%	21.5	24%	22.7
1998	6,384	22%	15.5	51%	21.1	28%	22.5
1999	6,548	25%	15.5	49%	21.1	26%	22.6
2000	7,822	27%	15.2	44%	20.7	28%	21.9
2001	9,975	26%	15.7	50%	20.1	24%	22.1
2002	10,575	27%	15.7	47%	21.3	27%	22.5
2003	10,366	24%	15.3	49%	21.3	28%	22.4
2004	10,765	24%	15.8	49%	21.4	27%	22.8
2005	11,159	33%	14.9	44%	20.9	23%	22.3
<b>Previous Years' Means **</b>		<b>25%</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>22.4</b>
2006	13,193	14%	14.5	67%	20.7	19%	22.1

\* Based on longest spur measurement

\*\* Mean percents and weights based on previous 10 years.

**Figure 4**  
**Harvest Age Structure 1980-2006**

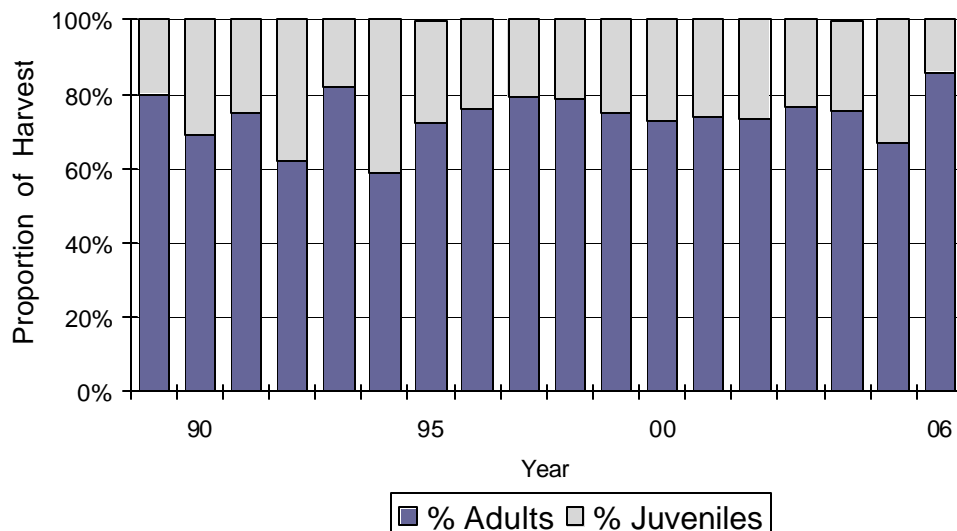


Table 3. Summary of Indiana's wild turkey hunting seasons, 1970 to 2006.

Year	Regular Season Dates	Season Length (Days)	No. of Counties	No. of Permits Sold*	Est. No. of Hunters**	Reported Harvest	Hunter Success
1970	5/2-5/5	4	3	75	62	6	9.7%
1971	5/1-5/5	5	9	298	224	11	4.9%
1972	4/26-4/30	5	9	585	422	12	2.8%
1973	4/25-4/29	5	11	625	503	27	5.4%
1974	4/24-4/28	5	11	665	496	26	5.2%
1975	4/29-5/5	7	11	722	501	15	3.0%
1976	4/29-5/5	7	13	666	500	32	6.4%
1977	4/28-5/5	8	16	668	520	46	8.8%
1978	4/26-5/7	12	18	852	619	33	5.3%
1979	4/25-5/6	12	19	932	860	48	5.6%
1980	4/23-5/4	12	17	706	670	54	8.1%
1981	4/22-5/3	12	18	922	814	90	11.1%
1982	4/21-5/2	12	18	1,125	696	73	10.5%
1983	4/20-5/1	12	18	1,218	984	93	9.5%
1984	4/25-5/6	12	18	1,320	1,205	104	8.6%
1985	4/24-5/5	12	25	1,882	1,302	255	19.6%
1986	4/23-5/4	12	25	2,523	1,648	293	17.8%
1987	4/22-5/6	15	33	3,348	2,619	741	28.3%
1988	4/27-5/11	15	33	10,894	4,677	905	19.4%
1989	4/26-5/10	15	39	11,442	6,068	1,359	22.4%
1990	4/25-5/9	15	39	14,379	7,860	1,505	19.1%
1991	4/24-5/8	15	43	16,387	9,643	2,318	24.0%
1992	4/22-5/6	15	43	18,735	13,110	2,531	19.3%
1993	4/28-5/16	19	48	21,078	15,673	3,500	22.3%
1994	4/27-5/15	19	48	23,357	18,622	3,741	20.1%
1995	4/26-5/14	19	52	28,858	20,861	4,706	22.6%
1996	4/24-5/12	19	52	28,733	21,442	4,859	22.6%
1997	4/23-5/11	19	74	32,703	23,085	5,790	25.1%
1998	4/22-5/10	19	74	32,889	22,876	6,384	27.9%
1999	4/21-5/9	19	74	38,730	27,285	6,548	24.0%
2000	4/26-5/14	19	74	<b>40,801</b>	<b>28,615</b>	7,822	<b>27%</b>
2001	4/25-5/13	19	74	<b>43,815</b>	<b>36,103</b>	9,975	<b>28%</b>
2002	4/24-5/12	19	90	<b>44,333</b>	<b>37,919</b>	10,575	<b>28%</b>
2003	4/23-5/11	19	90	<b>48,857</b>	<b>40,110</b>	10,366	<b>26%</b>
2004	4/21-5/9	19	90	<b>50,839</b>	<b>41,996</b>	10,765	<b>26%</b>
2005	4/27-5/15	19	88	<b>50,839</b>	<b>49,684</b>	11,159	<b>22%</b>
2006	4/26-5/14	19	88	<b>67,290</b>	<b>50,880</b>	13,193	<b>26%</b>
2007	4/25-5/13	19	91				

\* Since 1987 totals include lifetime licenses and since 1988 youth licenses sold from Jan-May.

\*\* No. of hunters includes those permit holders who hunted  $\geq 1$  day and since 1986 has been adjusted for non-licensed landowners or military hunters.

**Bold italics** = preliminary estimates based on projecting previous years' trends or means while also accounting for potential effects of regulation changes.